

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BERLIN PRIORITY
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SOPN, OVIP (CARTER, JIMMY), GE, GW, WB, US

SUBJECT: POST ARTICLE SEES DETERIORATION OF RELATIONS
WITH GDR IN WAKE OF PRESIDENT'S BERLIN VISIT

1. IN JULY 18 WASHINGTON POST ARTICLE DATELINED BONN,
MICHAEL GETLER CLAIMS THAT PRESIDENT'S VISIT TO BERLIN
WITH CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT HAS LED TO AN "UNEXPECTED TURN
FOR THE WORSE; IN GDR RELATIONS WITH US AND FRG. GDR,
ACCORDING TO GETLER, HAS DISPLAYED ESPECIALLY BITTER...
IRRITATION" OVER JOINT NATURE OF TRIP AND PRESIDENT'S
"SHARPLY CRITICAL" WORDS ABOUT GDR HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD,
RESPONDING WITH AUTOBAHN SLOWDOWN AND SHARP .TTACKS IN
PRESS ON FRG AND PRESIDENT. THIS "NEW TENSION", HE SAID,
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COMES AT A TIME WHEN BOTH EAST AND WEST GERMANS WERE
EXPRESSING OPTIMISM ABOUT HAMBURG AUTOBAHN TALKS AND
SHORTLY AFTER GDR "ATTEMPT TO IMPROVE RELATIONS" WITH US
THROUGH DRESDEN EXHIBIT AND VISIT OF THREE MINISTERS.

2. PRESS ATTACKS ALLUDED TO BY GETLER WERE JULY 17 NEUES
DEUTSCHLAND ATTACK ON ALLEGED NEO-NAZISM AND CIVIL RIGHTS

RESTRICTIONS IN FRG AND "RARE PERSONAL ATTACK" ON
PRESIDENT IN LEIPZIG PAPER. LATTER REPORTEDLY CHARGED
PRESIDENT WITH HOLDING UP A NEW ARMS AGREEMENT, INTER-
FERING IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF SOVIET UNION AND CONFUSING

HIS RESPONSIBILITIES AS PRESIDENT "WITH THAT OF A
BAPTIST PREACHER".

3. IN RESPONSE TO JULY 18 AP QUERY ABOUT POSSIBLE
CONNECTION BETWEEN THE ARTICLE AND PREVIOUS DAY'S CALL
BY AMBASSADOR SIEBER ON ACTING SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT
OFFICER TOLD AP THAT TWO ITEMS WERE UNRELATED, WITH
SIEBER'S CALL BEING BRIEF, NON-SUBSTANTIVE FAREWELL
VISIT. DEPARTMENT OFFICER ALSO CONTESTED CONCLUSIONS
OF THE ARTICLE, POINTING OUT THAT U.S. HAD NO INTENTION
OF WORSENING RELATIONS WITH GDR AND NO EVIDENCE OF SUCH
AN INTENTION ON GDR SIDE. ASKED IF PRESIDENT'S REMARKS
IN BERLIN, AND LEIPZIG PAPER'S ATTACK, RAN COUNTER TO
SUCH AN ASSESSMENT, DEPARTMENT OFFICER SAID THAT THE
PRESIDENT CLEARLY COULD NOT IGNORE THE WALL WHILE IN
BERLIN AND THAT HIS COMMENTS WERE APPROPRIATE TO THE
OCCASION. AS HE HAD NOT READ THE LEIPZIG ARTICLE,
DEPARTMENT OFFICER REFUSED COMMENT ON IT. CHRISTOPHER

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